

MODERN TIMES

"What you do is news!"

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New Haven

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February 1-14, 1973

Unions Call Boycott Of Scab Printed Register

by Henry Tamarin
Modern Times Staff

between the Pressmen and the Register are currently at a standstill.

Support Rally

The New Haven Central Labor Council discussed the status of the Pressmen strike at its January meeting and on the basis of that discussion issued a call to the labor community and its supporters to attend a rally in support of the Pressmen.

This call was accompanied by a plea to the general public to further support the strike by canceling subscriptions to the Register, with a small note to the management telling them exactly why it is being done.

All the Pressmen interviewed felt that their determination to win the strike had hardened over the last few weeks. "There was one point back there where a few of us were pretty low but things have gotten a lot better. Money isn't a problem for most of us because we're getting tremendous support from our international. Last week I got my usual \$50 weekly strike benefit and worked a few shifts out of town so that my take home for the week was about \$190" said one pressman.

"It's a rotten lousey thing to do", was one of the milder comments from a picketing pressman about his fellow workers in the International Typographers Union who have crossed the pressmen's line since their own contract expired on Jan. 1. The pressmen are moving into their eleventh week on the line and although morale is high, many feel that the strike could have been ended in early January if the 250 man ITU had respected their picket line and stayed out.

"As it is," said one union member, "they're riding on our coattails and letting us do all their fighting for them. The way I see it, the word "union" means unite and work together. Those rats don't even deserve to call themselves a union after what they've done here." Negotiations

(MT photo by Matt Borenstein)



On Saturday, January 11, 1973, several people showed up for a rally in support of the striking Register pressmen. Included were representatives from the International Association of Machinists, the New Haven Federation of teachers, the West Haven Federation Of Teachers, Rubber Workers, Painters, Ct. State Employees Association, and a sister pressman's local.

Teachers Flunk Bad Contract

Modern Times Staff

"One half of one percent wage increase over 2 years? Those bums must be kidding." The 800 New Haven public school teachers called together by the teachers union were not pleased by the Board of Education's latest contract offer - at all.

800 teachers means 2 out of every 3 teachers in New Haven were present at the Wilbur Cross High School on that Wednesday, January 24, when an overwhelming majority voted to reject the Board's latest offer.

The day before, Tuesday, January 23, stunned the Board of Education when 250 out of 300 teachers in 6 New Haven schools called in sick. Three of the stricken schools - Troup Middle School, Sheridan Middle School, and Wilbur Cross High School had to close early because the Board could not find enough substitutes to replace ill teachers.

Cause of the Illnesses

"If the teachers say they are sick, then they are sick." So says the New Haven Federation of Teachers. Whether the coincidental illnesses were caused by London Flu or by the refusal of the Board to offer a reasonable contract is still an open question.

The meeting of the 800 teachers also voted to give the New Haven Federation of Teachers (NHFT) negotiating committee one more try to talk to the Board of Education. If the Board does not come up with an acceptable contract offer by February 15, the teachers agreed to meet again to take a vote on whether to strike.

The teachers heard with outrage that the Board's latest offer amounts to a 3.03% wage increase - including increments for next year. Under the teacher's old contract they would have received a 2.57% salary increase in earned increments. So the Board of Education's offer amounts to less than



Several New Haven teachers compare the Board of Education's offer to Union Demands. The teachers rejected that offer. (MT photo by Matt Borenstein)

a half a per cent wage hike over a two year contract.

Need More Money

The Federation, as the legal bargaining agent for all teachers in the city, has maintained that it will not accept an offer for next year which does not take into account increases in the cost of living over the last two years which has been over 7%. The union has also said that there must be some pay raise for teachers at the maximum this year who received no increment.

Teachers at the maximum have been serving the city for over twelve years. The NHFT claims that the Board by presenting such a miserable offer is trying to drive these dedicated teachers out of the system and save

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Real Education

"And the thing is," he added, "That we're getting a real education in these out-of-town shops. You take a rinky dink town like Providence and the guys up there are pulling in \$50 a week more than the scale down here. What's more they've got better working conditions and better manning of the equipment. I think that the Register is getting real pissed that we're seeing so much because now we really want to win what these other guys have."

Dave Redmond, President of the International Typographers Union, refused any comment to this reporter about his union's failure to recognize the Pressmen picket line or the status of their negotiations with the company.

Said one pressman when asked about the Typographers, "They think they're smart selling us out but all you get for that brown nose is a cut throat the next time around. The way I see it is that people fought to make the union movement what it is today and we have to keep fighting to preserve a strong union for those who follow after us. Without a union you're dead."

What's Inside

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A & P Latest Target Of Farmworker Boycott



Martha Martinez led a strong following to the A&P in East Haven on January 19, to protest that company's unwillingness to purchase U.F.W. lettuce. (M-T photo by Sergio Verillo)

by Mathew Lofchie

The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, which got its start selling used tea, is running scared.

Throughout the nation, small groups supplementing the United Farm Workers' lettuce strike, have begun boycott action against the world's largest foodstore chain, asking shoppers not to patronize A&P until it publicly commits itself to selling only union lettuce or no lettuce at all.

The boycott commenced locally on Jan. 19 at the East Haven A & P on Frontage Road. Thirty-five picketers, including a Bridgeport contingent, gathered at noon for a four hour demonstration. The picketers carried signs and sang songs near the store and along the adjoining highway.

George Sheridan, Connecticut UFW head, claims that A&P officials have reneged on specific promises made to Caesar Chavez last fall that they would cooperate with UFW's request to boycott non-union lettuce. Actually, in the past few weeks, A&P stores in this area have

stocked union lettuce exclusively. However, says Sheridan, this is more union lettuce than had been stocked in the previous six months.

Picketing Successful

The head of the New Haven boycott project, Martha Martinez, claimed to have personally turned away 350 dollars worth of business on the 19th, which is a lot of lettuce. She plans to continue picketing at the East Haven A&P every Thursday and Friday night and all day Saturday.

A decision by the California Supreme Court last month invalidated several injunctions against the strike obtained by the growers. The growers claimed that the UFW was illegally striking in a jurisdictional dispute between themselves and the Teamsters Union.

The growers signed contracts with the Teamsters 2½ years ago, designating that union to represent the farmworkers.

However, the Court ruled that the farmworkers did not desire to be represented by the teamsters, and that the union of Caesar Chavez, UFW, was the only union

operating.

Revised Contract

On Jan 16, the Teamsters revised their contracts with the growers reportedly establishing higher wages for the farmworkers than the UFW contracts, but without the UFW health and safety provisions. Most crucially, from the point of view of UFW, the Teamster deal perpetuates the use of contractors to obtain workers rather than a union hiring hall.

To date, the Teamsters have not signed up any appreciable number of workers, making their contracts meaningless.

Jerry Cohen of the UFW legal department in Le Paz, California, labels the new contracts a public relations smokescreen, that allows the growers to call products of scab labor union products. This is also A&P's justification for selling non-union lettuce.

Both Martinez and Sheridan feel confident that the A&P managers are relaying their complaints about the lettuce to their supervisors and that eventually sound business policy will dictate that only union lettuce be sold.

However, Sheridan made a distinction between buying union and boycotting non-union. Union lettuce is already selling well and needs no support. It is only when retail outlets stop buying non-union lettuce that real economic pressure can be applied to the growers. Sheridan feels that there is not enough UFW lettuce available (15% of total lettuce output) for A&P to sell at its present volume. The prospect of being caught shorthanded in the lettuce aisle, says Sheridan, is what's prompting A&P to stall.

A&P is obviously concerned about the boycott. The local managers right up to the New York office refuse to say anything about the situation except to claim that they sell only "union" lettuce; after that, they get testy.

Apparently, A&P believes the public support of the boycott is strong, perhaps stronger than it really is. It seems at this point, that these small groups of committed citizens will cause A&P to revise their lettuce policy inside of six months.

If you'd like to get in on the action, call Martha Martinez at 288-4905 for information.

Community Notes

BENEFIT DANCE CONCERT

The New Haven Women's Rock Band will give a dance-concert on Friday, February 2nd, at 8:00 p.m. The dance is a benefit for the Morning Sun, New Haven's only cooperative, non-profit free school for children. It will be held at our new location-2105 State Street, just beyond the motor vehicle station over the Hamden line.

Everyone is invited to celebrate our new place with music, dance and refreshments. For tickets and information, call 387-7474 or 776-2512. Tickets will also be sold at the door.

TALENT FESTIVAL

"Rhapsody in Black," a festival featuring the visual and performing arts by local black talent, will be a special highlight of Race Relations, Sunday, February 11th, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel on Whitney Avenue in Hamden, 2-9 p.m.

Adults, \$2.00; Students, \$1.00; Children under 12, \$.50. For more information call Judy Myrick, 288-0774.

NEW LEARNING LAB OPENED

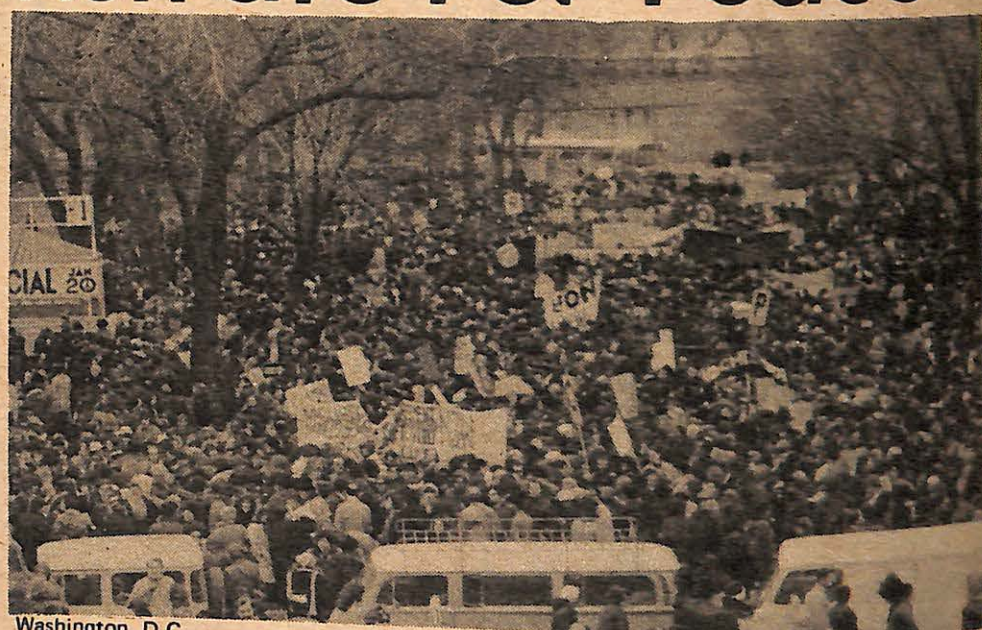
A social change laboratory has been scheduled for March 9-11th by a number of community and religious groups in Connecticut. Located at the Ecumenical Continuing Education Center, 363 St. Ronan Street, New Haven, the three-day lab, open to anyone 17 or older, will focus on learning by doing rather than by listening. The cost per person is \$30. For further information call: The Urban League, 624-4168, or Christian Community Action, 777-7848.

We Still Must Demonstrate For Peace



New Haven

(MT photo by Patti Miller)



Washington, D.C.

(MT photo by Joseph Taylor)



New Haven

(MT photo by Patti Miller)

Two weeks ago, despite the impending "Peace Treaty," hundreds of thousands of Americans across the nation demonstrated for Peace in Indochina. Some said that our government was only trying to trick us with fancy words and false hopes, others felt that our pressuring for a meaningful, just peace must continue until it's truly achieved. Here in New Haven the Inaugural Action Committee sponsored a downtown march calling on Nixon to end the war, and for our government to be more responsible to its people. On Inauguration Day AIM-Modern Times and the New Haven Coalition for Peace and Justice co-sponsored a Children's March for Peace in front of the Post Office. We were 200 strong in number. And in Washington on that day Nixon was embarrassed and the world was glad to see an estimated 200 thousand demonstrating against his war policies and lies. In fact, we considerably outnumbered those who were there to greet the president.



Washington, D.C.

(MT photo by Nick Heyer)

Tables Are Turned As Mory's Goes On Strike

After 121 years of calm at the tables down at Mory's, things just haven't seemed to go right for the last two years at the place where Louis dwelt.

The troubles of the Yale private club — founded in 1849 — increased January 23 when Local 217, Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders Union, AFL-CIO, announced that it is striking Mory's because, the Union charged, the club "fired a waiter for organizing his fellow workers into our Union."

The posh York Street club has already been under fire from a group of women who have sued for admission to the all-male membership, and from the State Liquor Authority, which has revoked Mory's liquor permit in a case still winding its way through the courts.

Waiter Fired

Local 217 Secretary-Treasurer John Wilhelm charged that Mory's caused "a totally unnecessary strike by the firing of Leo Daigle in mid-January." Mr. Daigle has been a waiter in New Haven for years; he went to work for Mory's several weeks earlier.

"A clear majority of Mory's workers have joined Local 217," Wilhelm said, "but unfortunately management's calculated firing of Mr. Daigle has partially succeeded in its goal of scaring other employees." Wilhelm said he did not expect all of the workers to strike, but that he was confident on the basis of signed union cards that a majority want Union representation "even if they are now afraid to walk out."

The Union suggested that Mory's reinstate Daigle and let the State Board of Labor Relations conduct a secret ballot election to see if a majority really want the Union. "They flatly refused to put him back to work, even though he was clearly fired for Union activity," said Wilhelm.

Mory's Claim Ridiculous

Mory's management has said that Daigle was fired because he was not a good waiter and because he had an alleged run-in with the new chef and the new headwaiter. The



Since January 23, the Immortal or Immoral Mory's has been the site of daily picketing by Local 217 - H.R.E.B.U.-A.F.L.-C.I.O. The picket line has not been honored by such well-knowns as former mayor Richard Lee. (M-T photo by Edw. Breuler)

Union answers, "To show how ridiculous this is, on the day he was fired, the Manager refused to give him any reason at all, and his termination slip also shows no reason at all."

"This procedure all by itself makes Mory's claim ridiculous," Wilhelm charged. "They gave no reason for Daigle's dismissal because they wanted time to meet with their lawyers and phony up a reason for the firing." Wilhelm finished his comments by noting that "Since then Mory's has embarked on a campaign of character assassination against Mr. Daigle to try to justify his discharge. We won't allow them to succeed in demeaning Mr. Daigle to justify their illegal actions."

Picketing Goes Ahead

Unfair labor practices charges and a petition for a Union representation election

have both been filed by the Union with the State Board of Labor Relations. But it is clear that the Union regards the Board's procedures as slow and therefore expects the dispute to be settled on the picket line in front of Mory's.

Picketing has been quite heavy in front of Mory's. The Union reports that several other unions have honored the picket lines and refused to make any deliveries. The Teamsters and Meat-Cutters were mentioned. On the other hand, the Quality Fish Market was reported to cross the picket line regularly.

Teachers Angry

continued from page 1

some money on wages.

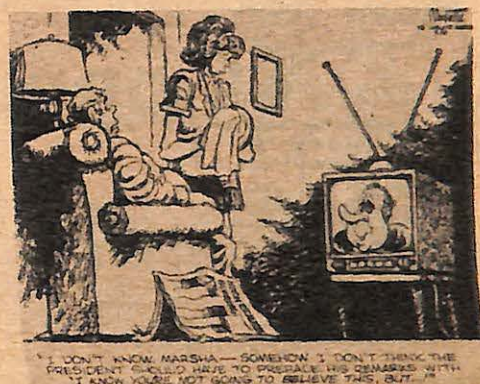
Another contract proposal of the union is for a \$200 contribution by the city per teacher for a union-run teacher benefit program. This could provide a non-taxable cash benefit to teachers in terms of increased health insurance, life insurance, dental care, or a prescription drug program.

No Money

The Board claims it doesn't have any money to pay teachers any more than the 3.03% it offered. However, the NHFT says it has discovered that the Board does not seem to know how much money it has. The Federation points to the fact that the Board reported to an arbitration panel last August that increments this year would cost over \$350,000. The union has since discovered that increments this year only cost \$90,000. What happened to the \$250,000, everyone is asking.

"The city is also talking about adding a \$5 million exhibition hall to the coliseum. There seems to be money available for some things but not for education."

Teachers are angry (i.e. ready to do something) about this situation.



Labor Notes

"FEMALE" JOBS OPENING UP TO MEN

In 1973, according to a New York Post survey, the tide will turn in favor of Men's Liberation -- at least in New York City -- with more jobs, formerly the exclusive property of women, now opening up for men. The biggest "breakthroughs" are coming in the telephone and airline industries. Five years ago American Telephone and Telegraph had virtually no male operators among its 165,000 employees; now it has 1,100 males on the switchboards. Eastern Airlines had only 150 airline stewards last March; today it has 320 stewards and 3,458 stewardesses.

NIXON'S LEADING LADY FOUND GUILTY BY NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

Romana Banuelos of Los Angeles, Nixon's appointee for U.S. Treasurer, is also the owner of Romona's Mexican Food Products, Inc., where over 200 workers are on strike for decent wages and conditions. The NLRB found this super-exploiter guilty of vicious coercion of its workers, mainly women. Workers were threatened with loss of jobs, with deportation to Mexico, and stripped of holidays and health and welfare benefits. The Board ordered the company to restore the losses of some 132 employees - most of them earning under \$2 an hour.

BIG CORPORATIONS PENALIZE WOMEN WORKERS FOR PREGNANCY

The Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers are charging the Westinghouse and General Electric companies with discriminatory practices against pregnant women workers. While male employees are paid benefits for every kind and type of sickness, female workers are denied benefits for illness related to pregnancy or childbirth. They are further penalized by losing seniority rights, accrual of holiday and vacation pay as well as pension rights, and a return to their former jobs. The Union filed the charges on a national basis, on behalf of thousands of women workers, with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. In a similar action, the United Auto Workers has filed charges with the EEOC against General Motors, Ford and Chrysler, charging them with discrimination against their women workers by curtailing their benefits for pregnancy-related disabilities.

BOYCOTT SMACKS FARAH WITH \$8.3 MILLION LOSS

New York — The loss of \$8.3 million in the past fiscal year, disclosed by the Farah Manufacturing Co. in its annual statement, is concrete evidence that the international boycott of Farah products is having its effect, Clothing Workers Sec.-Treas. Jacob Sheinkman declared.

Farah's \$8.3 million loss for the fiscal year that ended last Oct. 31 compared with a profit of \$6 million for the preceding fiscal year. Sales were down by more than \$10 million.

Sheinkman said it was unfortunate that Farah's stockholders as well as workers have to suffer because of the management's "refusal to live up to the law of the land."

IAM Inauguration



On Jan. 28, swearing ceremonies were performed by Grand Lodge Representative George Poulin for the elected officers of Victory Lodge 609 of the International Association of Machinists. The ceremonies were held at the IAM's regular meeting.

(MT photo by Peter Irvine)

Editorial

Nixon Gives Labor The Business

The big point in Nixon's inaugural speech boils down to this: Since the Great Depression of the 1930's, the governments under FDR, Truman, Kennedy and Johnson tried — or said they tried — to do something about social injustice, exploitation, poverty, etc. That effort, Nixon thinks, failed.

What is more, Nixon thinks it failed because the government tried too much to do too many things. Instead, Nixon pledged in the next four years to cut down many government programs in order, he said, to get people to do more for themselves.

If this were not the cynical destruction of millions of Americans' futures, it would just be silly talk by a not-too-bright President. For it is just plain wrong.

First, the real reason why government since FDR failed to do what it promised for people and what people needed was *not* because it tried to do too much. The problem was exactly the opposite: the government dared to do far too little. Governments were timid and ineffective because they refused to step on the privileges of the big American corporations and the rich who own and run them.

For every dollar spent by government to help people, ten dollars had to be given to corporations to boost their profits (in cost-plus contracts, subsidies, purchases, etc.) For every dollar in taxes raised from big business profits, five dollars were taken from wages and salaries. So the government was constantly low on money to pay for people's needs and at the same time unable to tax further an already overburdened working class.

Money Talks



by Rick Wolff
Modern Times Staff

"In peace we have always had heavy unemployment and recession; in war we have always had full employment and prosperity." This statement comes from *The State of the Connecticut Economy* the title of the first annual report issued by the new Connecticut Council of Economic Advisors.

The Legislature, in Public Act No. 221, Sec. 4(a), set up the 5-man council to report annually to the governor and the general assembly. Released last month, the 33 page report gives answers to questions like: What is happening to jobs and incomes in the state? What causes the ups and downs in Connecticut's economic health? What changes are affecting the population and the different industries in this state?

Much valuable information is brought together in this report. A few highlights of special interest to *Modern Times* readers, are presented in this column.

Depend on Defense

The report makes one point several times, bringing up ever more evidence to prove it: the State of Connecticut depends very desperately on defense contracts awarded to Connecticut businesses. From World War II to the present, every time defense contracts went down, unemployment rose.

For example, from 1968 to 1971, while defense contracts shrank by half, unemployment rose from an average monthly figure of 49,500 to 122,000 people. The ups and downs in Connecticut result from the uncertain and erratic decisions in Washington on when to produce what for war.

In 1947, over half of all jobs in Connecticut were in manufacturing (54% to be exact). Since then, almost all new jobs have been outside manufacturing. By 1972, only one-third of all jobs were in manufacturing. The other two thirds of us earn our livings doing one kind of service or another. And all available evidence points to service-type jobs replacing factory-type jobs even more in the future.

Young Unemployed

Connecticut's population is growing

Second, Nixon is wrong in trying to suggest that life will get better by pulling government out of any concern with helping working people and poor people. For then people will be thrown on the mercy of big business for decent jobs and incomes. And what can working people expect from bosses?

Remember that it was the total collapse and failure of businessmen to run our economy in the 1930's that made masses of American working people and poor people force the government to step in and do something. Nixon is setting us up again for the same fate.

Lastly, there is the matter of what Nixon did not say in his speech, but which is a major purpose behind his intended cut-back of government programs for people. Nixon means business. His policies will force people to work at any wages — no matter how low — just to survive.

Millions of Americans now helped by or employed by government programs will have to turn soon to low-paying jobs instead. Low wages are the order of the day. Business wants them to face competition from abroad. Lower profits might do the same, but business prefers to see wages take the pressure, not profits. And Nixon represents business.

His planned cutbacks are really an attack on the working people and the poor people of this country. Divide and conquer will likely be his method. To defeat his plan will mean above all to unite working people into strong, fighting organizations (unions, neighborhood groups, political clubs and parties) that can teach their members what is coming down and arrange a plan to stop it.

Conn. Economy Linked To War Production

much more slowly now than at any time since World War II. But meanwhile, the number of young people starting to look for jobs is very high. This is causing great worry, because the statistics show that Connecticut has to come up with 22,000 new jobs each year during the 1970's just to provide work for young people newly entering the labor force. The trouble is that in peacetime, since World War II, the average number of new jobs in this state has been only 10,000 per year. What will happen now?

Connecticut residents continue to enjoy the nation's highest average income per person — as they have in most recent years. The figure for 1972 is estimated at \$5,435 on the average for every man, woman and child in the state. The reason for this high figure is found in the fact that for every 75 cents earned by Connecticut residents who *work* for their in-

come (wages and salaries), 25 cents was earned by some Connecticut residents who own property (stocks, bonds, land, businesses) which brings their income without working. To put this in other words, Connecticut has a fairly large number of rich residents who lift the average income per person.

Much of the report expresses deep concern over the deterioration of the manufacturing base of Connecticut's economy. Reasons are suggested and remedies hinted at. In the next issue of *Modern Times* the problems, remedies and future of factories in Connecticut will be discussed in terms of what this report says and what it neglects to say. Meanwhile, any reader who wants information on the Connecticut economy can get a free copy of the report by writing to Governor Meskill, State Capitol, Hartford.

Write On

Coliseum Hangups

To the Editors:

Several months ago, I went to see the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus at the New Haven Veterans Memorial Coliseum. I had bought \$4 tickets and had expected to sit fairly close to the action. But there I was overlooking the huge metal ducts that were attached to the ceiling. My son commented on the fact that we were higher than the trapeze artists.

A few days later I went to see if this held true for the New Haven Nighthawks. It did. The same price ticket bought me a seat up in the 40th row and numbers on the jerseys looked like blurred fragments of the shoe

size of the dreaded Tsetse fly.

I have been going to sports events and other special events in this city for over 20 years and never have I had such a horrible time as I did at the Coliseum. The prices are too high and most of the events are not worth the purchase price of the ticket. The Nighthawks are far from pleasing. When you go see a play, if the actors or actresses are not entertaining, then they have missed the boat. Same applies for the Nighthawks. They are not entertaining at all. Seeing the kind of sport which is supposed to be fast and furious and filled with many spectacular moments reduced to a game of chasing a little black object around the ice for sixty minutes, is a crime.

Another thing which I find wrong with the Coliseum is the fact that there is no public skating. This is also a crime. I heard that it takes a minimum of \$800 just to open the doors to the place and this is the reason there is no public skating. So city people have to try their luck and just may find a dump somewhere to skate.

It seems a shame that New Haveners have had to suffer through the building of this Monster and the high price that it gobbles up, and to swallow the inferior types of entertainment that it dishes out. What we need is a New Arena!

Sincerely,
Joe Wynsocki

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MODERN TIMES is published by the American Independent Movement (AIM) as its political organ. Work on MODERN TIMES is done by volunteers, both members and non-members of AIM. The political views of AIM are given in the editorial. We encourage contributions of the New Haven community in the form of articles and letters.

MODERN TIMES is a paper to tell the story of and by the people of New Haven. We don't get that kind of news in commercial papers run for profit. There is no place else where the work and play of people who aren't rich is considered important enough to write about. There is no place else in New Haven where the problems of working women and men are told by them instead of by their bosses. There is no place else where hunger, bad housing and education, lack of health care and police harassment that people live with is told by them.

We live in the richest country in the world. But only a few people get to use most of this wealth for themselves. We must all work together to claim the wealth we all helped to create. Then there would be no need to strike for a few more crumbs, waste our resources

and labor on rockets and bombs, or waste the lives of our young men in wars like Vietnam. We would produce what we need — not what is profitable.

The American Independent Movement has been working since 1966 to get people together against the rich, powerful few who run New Haven and the whole country. We want everyone to have good housing, good education, child care centers, recreation areas, decent health care and decent jobs.

STAFF: David Adams, Gary Benenson, Matt Borenstein, Ed Breuler, Jerry Cohen, Ellen Comisso, Vittorio Comisso, Lillian Dimow, Joelle Dominski, Art Fleischner, Paul Gill, Sam Goodwin, Stanley Heller, Liz Henderson, Nick Heyer, Eileen Hoffman, Peter Jackson, Lynne Karsten, Karl Lechow, Alice Mick, Ray Milici, Patti Miller, Laurie Nussdorfer, Jim Jordan, Renee Poirier, Peter O'Connell, Naomi Resnick, Ruth Resnick, Florrie Ricciuti, Bob Sherry, Henry Tamarin, Ross Thompson, Sergio Verillo, Rick Wolff, Karen Wolff, Tony Della-Ventura, Rusty Foster.

Brass Tacks

Might Makes Right—Can Union Fight?

An interview with a New Haven worker as told to Edw. Breuler, MT Staff

I like unions and what they stand for. I hear a lot of talk about how good they are and hear the proof. It all sounds good and gives me a special feeling of deepest pride to be able to belong to a union. But at some places, the company has too much power over the union and exercises this control to its fullest capabilities.

I had been looking for work for about eight months. Time after time I was told that there were no jobs available for a handicapped man. Things were getting pretty tight for me until one day I got a job in a local wire manufacturing plant. I was very happy to get a job and was looking forward to joining the union in the shop.

I was told by the foreman that I had to train behind another man in order that I might learn the rules of the company and the various jobs that were available to me. After a week, I was able to run a wire printing and measuring machine. I ran this machine very well and made very few mistakes. There were many types of wires and different colors and lengths but I managed to fulfill all the orders that were given to me.

He's the Boss

After two weeks, the foreman came up to me and told me that I had to switch jobs. He told me that I was unable to read the orders correctly and was making a mess of the whole thing. When I began to tell him that I was doing my job and doing it well, he interrupted me and told me that he was the *Boss* and if I did not want to move to a new job I could move out the door.

I was not in the union at the time and had no other choice but to move to the new job. The job was called a floorman job and consisted of sweeping up and cleaning up around the machines. It was also lower on the pay scale than my previous job. The thing that bothered me was the fact that I had started paying dues one week after I began working there and the union had no say in the matter.

I had to wait two months before I got in to the union. I felt that in this time the company could do anything that they wanted to do with me. It turns out that I remained in the position of floorman.

No Other Job for Me

After my two month struggle had ended, I bid on a job that was much better than mine. I was immediately called to the personnel office and told that I could not bid on a job with my kind of handicap or for that matter if I had anything wrong with me physically I could not get another job as long as I stayed there. The union steward sat across from me and said nothing. I was not covered in the union contract or maybe I was under Slave Labor.

I decided to see all the high officials in the union to see if anything could be done. I got the old run around and found myself down on the floor again. I even went to the union meeting and got little response to my question. I could not get above the job of floorman. The company did not want me to get any higher and the union, well, I think that they did not have enough power to do anything.

I got sick for two days once and did not get paid for those days that I was home. So in order to get some money I had to go to work, sick. I was told there that if I did not work, I would not get paid. I wondered if the President or the Vice President of the company were out sick, if they did not get paid.

I'm Not Alone

It seems as though I have no future in this company. But I do not feel alone because I know that there are others just like me that have difficulties when they begin

working. The Union cannot help you in those first 30, 60 or 90 days you work at a new job. No sick days, no rights and you really are the slave of the big company.

All the worker's in this plant are exposed to asbestos inhalation. The company gives us no protection at all. I read last week that workers who smoke have a lung cancer rate 800% higher than smokers in the general population.

It's hard to build a strong organized movement of working people. But this is what we must have to bring about the progressive changes America so badly needs. There are many different views on how to do this. We open this column to you, our readers, to exchange ideas and to discuss tactics and strategies. Please send us your ideas and your responses to what you read here.

I have been working for 75 days now and nothing has changed.

For this kind of problem to vanish from the scene, the union must get sufficient power to protect the employees from these subversive tactics. The union workers must see that all union people must receive the same benefits without any restraints.

Open Line

Jan Baeker & Mark Kaplin
Occupational Health Project

We read and discussed your "On the Job" interview with non-union pressman Larry Slaney (*Modern Times*, Jan. 1) at our last meeting and felt that a reply was necessary.

Mr. Slaney's basic point is that things are not so bad for him as a press operator in an unorganized shop. The fact that he must settle his own contract ("If I have a problem, if I want more money, I can come right up here in the office and talk to the boss and get it straightened out myself.") doesn't bother him much. Neither does the fact that he could lose his job ("The only thing is, if I came in one day and he said I was fired I'd be fired.") or his hearing in one ear.

Even the fact that his shop employs unsafe presses—he admits having watched the flesh from one of his fingers get stripped off because the press didn't have an accessible governing bar—doesn't seem to change his mind. Now surely no worker *prefers* lower wages, no job security (he worked nine shops in one year!), poor hearing and the constant threat of loss of a limb. Surely not! So why is he "satisfied"?

No Other Way?

The answer is, as the interview makes quite plain, that Mr. Slaney, like so many workers(union and non-union alike), thinks that it just can't be any other way. On the possibility of getting fired he says: "But that's to be expected. But I'm good and I know he's not going to fire me."

On the subject of his hearing: "The only thing is, I don't hear well out of one ear, and that's, I figure, from 20 years of running presses." And if there's an accident, he figures it must be the worker's fault. ("But then, you shouldn't have your hand in there anyway.")

We don't think it *has* to be that way at all. Specifically, the *Occupational Health Project* doesn't believe that any worker should be exposed to an unhealthy or dangerous place of work or working situation. The only reason that conditions are bad for working people is that their bosses find it easier and cheaper to keep it that way.

It seems to us that Mr. Slaney should be asking how many fingers the boss has lost

Probation Unfair To Workers

by Mike F. Holodnak

Newly hired workers, during their probationary period, have no union protection. They are vulnerable to summary dismissal for even the slightest infraction or the slightest company whim. And the more non-conformist a probee is, or appears to be, the greater are his or her chances for dismissal.

fact that no fault could be found with their work performance.

With all the company's efforts geared toward regimentation, playing one worker against another, creating a discordant atmosphere where workers could be conditioned into becoming obedient and efficient robots, two people in love obviously did not fit in. They would have been much more acceptable had they learned to make war, not love.

Countless Unjust Firings

Fortunately for these two, they had completed their 60-day probationary period and the union was able to intervene in their behalf and put an end to the company's harassment.

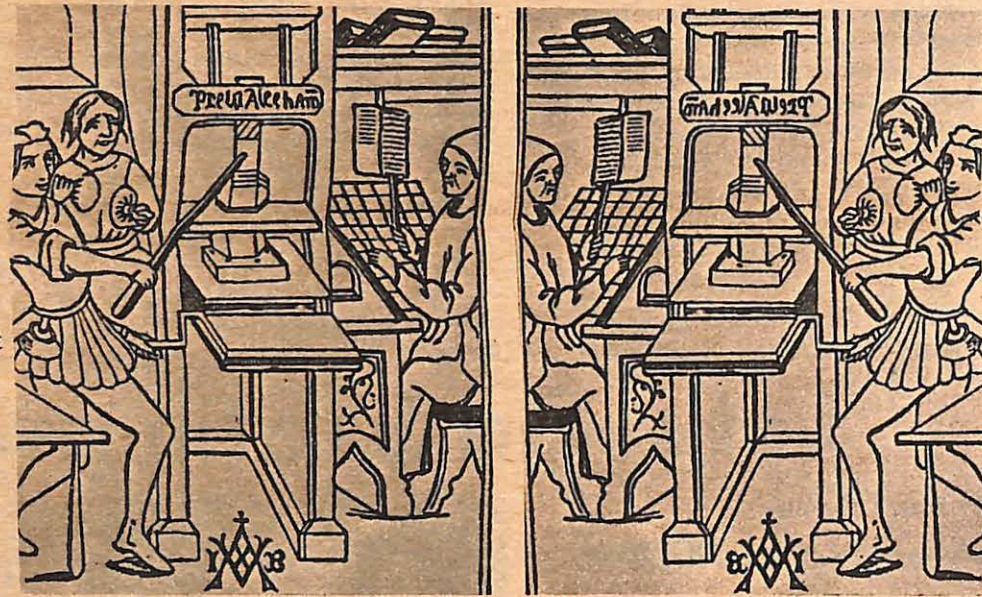
However, there are countless other new employees who are not that lucky who end up being unjustly fired before they could complete their probationary period. All this is allowed by the labor agreement which gives the company the right to be the **SOLE JUDGE** of an employee's qualifications.

As it is, in order to get hired, an applicant must first prove to the satisfaction of

see *PROBATION*, page 7

Take for example the case of a young man and woman engaged to be married who worked in the same department in a plant I worked in. They came to work together, took their coffee breaks together, ate their lunch together and went home together, all of which got them into trouble with their supervisor who took a dim view of their togetherness, despite the

Job Danger Unnecessary



at work (if the real "boss" does work). What are *his* working conditions? How many different jobs has *he* had this year and who tells *him* when, where and how to do his work?

Laws and Demands

But things don't have to be the way they are at all. There are now laws which help working people get improvements in their conditions, and although they're not very strong yet, they are a start. More important perhaps, working folks around the country have begun to *demand* changes—they are not "satisfied" with an occasional loss of limbs or senses.

And more than ever before, there are groups coming together such as ourselves to support these efforts with whatever legal, medical or technical skills are needed to compete with those who run the workplace for their own ends.

But all of this requires organization and cooperation among workers. Mr. Slaney is right when he realizes that he can't change these things - right at least so long as he stays on his own and views these things as his own private matters. The fact is, they are not his problems alone; they are problems for all working people and for all of us.

That's where the matter of the unions comes in. Historically, American unions have been able to effect many fundamental changes in the areas of wages, job security and better working conditions. Now some

unions are leading the push for safer and healthier working conditions, too. Even long range hazards like noise and chemicals which destroy the skin and lungs are being challenged and improvements won.

Many Unions Active

Of course, not all unions are actively engaged in helping make things safer for their members and for all working people. Some unions seem to have the attitude that there is nothing which can be done. Others have their hands full just saving jobs in these days of austerity, pay boards and unemployment. Others haven't yet considered the problem and few if any are yet helping organize those in unorganized shops whose conditions are often the worst of all.

Nonetheless, many labor unions are doing something about the unhealthy environments their people work in. Right here in New Haven, pressmen at Simkins, Corp., members of IPPU Local 531, have been waging a successful campaign with our support.

In six months the shop has been dramatically cleaned up, the temperature has been more carefully controlled and most recently, management was forced to spend over a hundred thousand dollars to install proper ventilation to clean the air of harmful particulate matter which was causing workers to cough and wretch.

So, Larry Slaney, we urge you to reconsider just what it is that you are taking so easily for granted—your health and your life.

EAST SIDE ROUND UP

Legends Of Fair Haven Middle School

by Frank R. Annunziato

Every old school in every old neighborhood probably has hundreds of stories and legends attached to it. So it is with Fair Haven Middle School.

The school was first opened in the late 1920's. At that point, and until a few years ago, it was known as Fair Haven Junior High School. Students entered in the seventh grade and left after completion of the ninth.

During the fifties, when the movie *Blackboard Jungle* shocked America, people from Fair Haven were convinced that our school was much worse. Some extremists, in fact, thought that Fair Haven made the school in the movie look like a fancy upper-class boarding school.

Oh, those were the glorious days, the 1950's. Rock and roll, black leather jackets, gangs, zip guns, pony tails, snap jack shoes, and spitting through the holes in your teeth.

The Beginning of School

Around the end of August, in those days, every sixth grader's heart started pumping rapidly. Within a couple of weeks, they would start at Fair Haven. Everybody knew that all seventh graders would get the crap knocked out of them by the ninth graders—just to show them who was boss. But what worried you most was just how many times this would happen. Anybody can get the crap knocked out of them once or twice—that ain't nothing—but you had to be real tough to take it once a week.

Finally, the day came! You didn't want to dress *too fancy* because that



A view of the Fair Haven Middle School on Grand Avenue.

(MT photo by Nick Heyer)

would make you look like you really wanted to go to school. On the other hand, you couldn't dress *like a bum* because, after all, you were now going to Fair Haven and you had to play the role all the way.

My First Day

I remember my first day at Fair Haven. I got there early because I wanted to see if I could find the art teacher that was hung out of the third floor window by his feet a couple of years before. Over the years, probably five thousand people have claimed to have participated in that event. Anyway, I rushed up to the third floor, saw some guy who was in an art room, and proudly told my buddy, "That's him! I know it because somebody told me he always wore gray suits!" I didn't have the slightest idea who the man was.

I got to my new homeroom and was very upset to find that only a couple of kids were there from my old elementary

school. Everybody else was from some other school. "They have to be creeps," I thought. I immediately hated the teacher because he had us sit in alphabetical order. I always hated that because it always meant I had to sit in the first or second seat. Everybody knew it was cool to sit in the back of the room. The teacher immediately deprived me of one of the little pleasures of school life.

There we all were, tiny seventh graders, sizing each other up. One of the things that crossed your mind was that basketball talent was there for the intramural tournament—there didn't seem like much. Later, when we formed our team, I found out—there wasn't much.

A Big Fight

We waited *very quietly* for the bell to ring for first period. All of a sudden, there was shouting in the hall. Two of the hugest kids I ever saw were fighting. Our teacher rushed from his seat and out to the hall. We all rushed to the door.

The two guys were flashing knives. Just like it was standard operating procedure, the teacher whacked the kids around, took away the knives, and sent them to the dreaded office. Welcome to Fair Haven.

During my three years at the school, I found out that many of the stories I had heard from the older Fair Haven alumni were the gospel. There was indeed a shop teacher who was shell-shocked from World War II. All you had to do was imitate a bomb falling, "E-e-BOOM!" and the guy went bananas.

The girls' gym teacher really did look like Wyatt Earp. She wore the same black jacket, the same string tie, white sweat socks, and sneakers every day. The Latin teacher really did curse and swear and tell stories about when he worked for the CIA and all the "whores" at the New York Times.

One of the science teachers actually knew karate and would volunteer to break your arm to prove it. An old lady art teacher spent the whole year teaching us to draw lotus blossoms.

The principal *never* came out of his office, *never*. There were some who thought that he didn't really exist. Kids did fight in the halls, the girls were just as tough as the boys, you didn't learn much, you got promoted, anyway—and then, wound up at high school. All true.

Changes?

Today, Fair Haven has become a middle school. The kids go from the fifth through the eighth grade. It's been cleaned up a lot; new paint, new fence, bushes, etc. But, I'm willing to bet that the kids are telling the same stories about the place. Hopefully, they're learning a lot more than we did.

Let's Go Skating—A Scouting Report

by Wm. J. Breuler

Modern Times Sports Reporter

MODERN TIMES would like to present the second article in the series of sports features relating to the city of New Haven. The following article was written in the hope that the reader might find a good and decent place to skate. That all depends of course on the weather.

Our reporter scouted the area for the best place to skate. His rating system is as follows. Those that have five stars are considered to be excellent for skating. Four stars are given to those places that are considered "good". Anything that is lower than that is not good at all. Now over to you, Bill.

O.K. Gang, get your C.C.M.'s (skates) and let's go for a tour of the the skating facilities in the New Haven Area. I suppose the best place to start is with a consideration of the the two public rinks in the greater New Haven Area. They are the Walker Rink at Blake Field and the Coogan Rink in Edgewood.

Both are good rinks on a Monday morning at 10:00 a.m. which is when they open. At any other time, however, it becomes very similar to a religious pilgrimage to the Ganges River. The crowds can be atrocious. I rate the Coogan and Walker rinks at four stars, mainly due to the small buildings which usually have fires blazing. The fee for skating is 50 cents.

But I promised you a tour and off we go. The next place to consider is, believe



Winter — A Skating Scene
by Winslow Homer

Wood engraving from
Harper's Weekly, 1868

it or not, the Hamden dump which is just behind West Rock. There are several large land fill trenches which freeze over and make for some excellent skating.

The ice tends to become concave but it is almost always hard and a good game of pond hockey can be had at the drop of a puck. The most people I've ever seen here are about ten boys playing hockey. However, don't bring your car after 5 p.m. as the Land Fill Operator locks the gate.

Right off state street by the Branford Marina is a pond which they use for floating and displaying boats in the summer. This can easily be seen from the road and is quite large. If privacy is your concern, however, you can simply cross the tracks and hike maybe fifty yards through the reeds where you will find a large pond, rink shaped and hidden from the road.

This area rightfully merits five stars.

Right off the boulevard by the Yale rowing course there are several small ponds laced throughout the reeds. These are excellent areas for hockey fanatics because almost every one of them is covered with swarms of Goldie Howes looking for an opening. It is for this reason that I rate this area at three stars.

Now if one is what we call a "River Skater" then one would be most interested in the reservoirs at the foot of West Rock just north of D'Andrea's on route 63. This is a huge open area that is never crowded no matter how many people are there. I've seen as many as 150 people on this pond and they had as much room as they could use to skate.

The only problem with this area are the holes left in the ice by ice-fishermen,

but these are all in one small area of the pond and present no real danger. In fact these fishermen lend quite an idyllic atmosphere to the general bustle of several hockey games going on, graceful gliders, schussingskaters, and the occasional squawk of a misplaced gull overhead. In fact it is an excellent area for bird-watching as well as skating.

For those of you who don't know what a "River Skater" is, he/she is a skater who skates and never stops. Such is the case with the reservoir as it must be a good mile across it. Five stars.

Sports Trivia Question:

Who was Sal Durante?

First Prize: 17 Trivia points and a head-start on your path to the trivia hall of fame. Answer to appear in the next issue.

Write answers to: MODERN TIMES, 441 Chapel St., New Haven, Ct., 06511

Norge Grille: A Warm And Friendly Place

by Ruth Resnick
Modern Times Staff

An Italian dirigible flew over the North Pole back in the mid-twenties and a bar in town got its name, the Norge Grille. The grille's history began in 1924 when, as a nameless bar and restaurant over on Congress Avenue, it was owned and operated by the uncle of Frank Yelmini, its present proprietor.

Surviving prohibition as a restaurant and moving to Commerce Street, being "redeveloped" to George Street, the Norge Grille is now at 21 Orange Street. Frank began working in the grille for his uncle, first as a bartender, and then moved to the kitchen where he has long since established himself as a fine cook. With no formal training—"little by little I stopped burning things,"—Frank whips up a terrific menu, specializing in Italian and seafood dinners.

Years ago Frank describes the place as having been more of a "brawly bar-room". But now regulars from Malleys, Macy's, the Gas Company and nearby stores and banks and building sites come in almost daily for lunch and perhaps a drink after work. With the Coliseum,



Frank Yelmini of the Norge Grille interrupted his work for an interview and picture for Modern Times.
(MT photo by Nick Heyer)

visitors vary from the circus help, to the booster club for the New Haven Night-hawks.

Keep 'Em Comin' Back

When asked if famous people ever dropped in Frank replied that Willie Williams of the Giants once came in and one of the bartenders recognized him by the ring he wore, but "famous people don't pay your rent." Who's important are the people who come in frequently. That's why Frank says he's tried to keep the prices down at the Norge. Money's hard enough to get and save these days and an expensive meal or drink every day would be very draining and discouraging.

Owning a restaurant is hard work. Frank's at the Norge from early morning until closing time seven days a week. He does his own bookkeeping and family members help out in the dining rooms and kitchen. Four bartenders keep the bar going.

Once inside the Norge Grille with its wood paneled walls and dim lights you could almost forget about the outside world. Almost. "There are people among the missing since the bus strike." One guy Frank knows who rides the bus has not been in for 6 weeks. And then, too, Redevelopment's plans for the downtown area leave the future of the Norge building somewhat uncertain.

Lowering the drinking age hasn't changed business much probably because the people who come in are, for the most part, over 25. "This place doesn't bounce around". Norge Grille, though, is a good place for talking with friends. The regulars all know each other.

Frank figures that's why so many people drop in. "You could drink at home. You come here because your friends are here."

In the shadow of the Coliseum there's an oasis of warm atmosphere with good food and drink and friends, the Norge Grille.

Did I Hear You Mention That NOISE ?

NOISE

Noise is defined as any unwanted sound. Noise can be both annoying and harmful to workers.

HOW NOISE IS MEASURED

Noise is measured in units called decibels (dB). On the decibel scale, zero decibels measures the least sound that someone with very good ears can hear at age 18. The decibel scale is logarithmic, which means that instead of 20 decibels being twice as loud as 10 dB, it is one hundred times as loud.

Here are the decibel levels of some common sounds in and out of industry:

NON-INDUSTRIAL SOUND:

Most sensitive hearing level	0
Whisper.....	10
Train whistle at 500 feet.....	90
Street noises.....	40-70

INDUSTRIAL SOUND:

Lathes	85-90
Punch presses.....	95-105
Circular saw on wood.....	100-110
Sand blasting.....	118
Riveting on steel plates.....	130

HOW NOISE AFFECTS WORKERS:

The Ears:

Noise affects the ears by reducing the ability to hear. Just how much noise is harmful has not been agreed upon by science, government, and industry. The federal government has set a limit of 90 dB for an eight-hour day as the maximum level of noise that can be tolerated by workers. After 30 years of working at a job with a 90 dB level, 15% or 1 out of every 6 workers will register enough hearing loss to be considered legally deaf.

Before the 90 dB level was set, industry requested that the legal limit be set at 100 dB. If this standard were put into effect, 40% of all working at this level would become legally deaf over a period of 30 years.

Scientists have determined that any continuous noise over 80 dB is harmful.



1703 Automatic Recording Audiometer, showing a freshly plotted audiogram of actual hearing-acuity response. The subject is seated in the GR 1939 Audiometric Examination Room.

DEVELOPMENT OF HEARING LOSS:

After a day in a factory with a high noise level, a worker will find that he has difficulty hearing normal conversation for several hours. Then the ear recovers its normal ability and the worker is back to normal the following day. The ear loses hearing ability when surrounded by too much noise just as the nose loses the ability to distinguish odors in the presence of certain unpleasant smells.

After daily exposure to noise over 80 dB, the worker eventually finds that his normal hearing ability does not return after several hours and his hearing becomes seriously impaired. In this type of hearing loss, the nerves are permanently damaged, and the worker's ability to hear cannot be improved with a hearing aid.

OTHER EFFECTS:

Noise can also affect other parts of the body:

1) It may cause a narrowing of the blood vessels. This causes a rise in blood pressure, an increased heart rate, and a decrease in the amount of blood that

reaches the arms and legs.

2) It may cause stomach problems and trouble with digestion.

3) Noise irritates and annoys the workers, reduces their work efficiency, and makes them more prone to industrial accidents.

PROTECTION AGAINST NOISE:

Various devices can be provided as a temporary measure to protect the worker from noise. The best protectors are heavy ear muffs. Ear plugs that are fitted individually or mould to the ear are also adequate, although they are uncomfortable. Cotton plugs afford almost no protection and should not be used. Despite these precautions workers in noisy environments can be expected to suffer some hearing loss and should be given regular hearing tests.

The best protection against noise is to eliminate its source. Equipment can be either redesigned or encased and separated from workers. Industry has not undertaken this task in the past, and, as a matter of fact, has relied on the workers hearing a change in the sounds of the machinery to detect mechanical problems.

Probationary Period Unnecessary

continued from page 5

the Personnel Manager that he or she is qualified to perform the work they apply for. This includes even the most menial and unskilled jobs. They must fill out a lengthy application form giving their past experience, past employment, schooling, etc., with a footnote warning that the answers have to be accurate or else the employee could be subjected to immediate dismissal if further investigation revealed falsification or any omissions.

Another Weapon

With this kind of tight hiring policy there is no real need for a probationary period. The probationary period is nothing more than another weapon for companies to use against working people.

It is one of the numerous unnecessary advantages companies have over employees, all under the allegedly sacred umbrella called management's rights.

Companies should not be allowed this kind of dictatorial powers. People should be able to earn a living as a right, not a privilege.

Of course during a strike all probationary employees automatically become union members entitled to strike benefits. But it would be better for the union, for newly hired workers and for human rights as a whole if all unions had the power to demand that the probationary clause in all labor agreements be completely eliminated.

On The Job

While You Sack Bakery Worker Stacks

by Ken Rosenthal as told to Stan Heller

I work at Entenmann's Bakery in West Haven on the 2 p.m. to 12 p.m. shift. I stack cake while you sleep.

My official title is "receiver of returned goods". Entenmann's actually bakes their cakes and pastry in Long Island. Drivers deliver the cakes to supermarkets and grocers all over Connecticut and parts of Massachusetts. When they make their rounds they bring back cake that retail stores didn't sell. At the end of the day they bring all these returns to the Entenmann's depot on Bull Hill Lane. Entenmann's buys all the returned cake from them, marks the boxes with a black line to indicate day old cake and then sells it to the public in a store in front of the depot.

My job is to check the count of the returned cakes and to stack the cakes on racks and arrange them in the store. I also close the store, straighten it out and take inventory on Saturday.

Needed to Adjust

The hours I work have caused real changes in my daily schedule. During the week it's impossible to have supper with roommates or friends or even to see a lot of people. The job has also really changed my eating habits. I have basically had to switch lunch with dinner because I can only grab a sandwich at my half hour dinner break. It actually took four or five months before my body totally adjusted to the night schedule.

In some ways, though, the evening shift is good. Your morning hours, your best hours of the day, are not given over to the company. You have a lot of energy and 3 and a half or 4 hours to get around and to do something.

On my job I'm alone a lot. That has advantages and disadvantages. It's not nice to be alone, but it's nice not to have supervisors around. Then they don't bug you and you can work at your own pace. At 9:30 p.m. the trailer comes in with fresh cakes from New York. I work with two other guys unloading it. That's the time I like best. I like the guys and we can shoot the breeze while working.

On the whole the job is not too bad though. There's a variety of things to do at different times of the day. It's both indoor and outdoor work and I have some control over when and how I do my work.

The Outfit Grew

Entenmann's started as a family



Ken Rosenthal is shown standing by cakes which he will stack at the Entenman's Bull Hill Store. (M-T photo by Patti Miller)

bakery and is still owned by the family. But it's really grown to be big business the last 15 years. I've been told ITT offered the family \$64 million for the bakery. It's a really big outfit. In Bayshore, they are supposed to have an oven as big as a football field or a large garage. Cake will go in on one end, be pulled right through and by the time it gets to the other end it's cooked.

The management claims they run the company like a small family operation, but that's not how things work out except in their eyes. We have a union contract, but they say they don't like to run things by the letter of the law. They want to do things informally with give and take on both sides.

Usually this works out to our disadvantage. We are paid on New York union scale which is pretty good compared to wages for the same jobs around here. So management thinks they can stretch work rules and overtime regulations.

I never had any real trouble with

supervisors until a couple of weeks ago. One day in closing the store I told the remaining customer that the store was closing, went to lock the door and as a third warning turned off the lights. My supervisors have an office with a one-way window through which they can look out on the store and watch us.

They came storming out and told me never to put all the lights out like that again. When I asked why, the supervisor got really angry and started saying things

like, "I'm your boss and that's reason enough."

Two days later I got a letter of reprimand. It criticized me on my attitude towards my supervisor (not on shutting off the lights).

I thought the letter was unfair and inaccurate so I answered it. I defended myself and mentioned some of the ways the supervisors were violating the contract. This got them even angrier. They said I shouldn't bring that kind of stuff up and that they often overlooked lots of things that we did.

We argued some more, but they never removed the letter from my personnel file. For a while all this caused my supervisors to act less friendly towards me, but things are back to normal now.

Working with Customers Fun

Some of the time I help out in the store, and occasionally funny things happen that pick up the day. Some customers don't realize that what we're selling is cake returned from the retail stores. They think the racks I bring out from the back are fresh. One day last summer I brought out a rack with a pineapple cheesecake on it that must have gotten hot riding around in one of the driver's trucks all day. One lady picked it up, broke into a big smile and said, "Ooh, it's still warm!"

Kids like the store, running around the aisles, looking at the cakes. They especially like the devil's food layer cake, maybe because it has a cherry on top. But the devil's food cake boxes are not sealed. So we often have devil's food layer cake on the floor and tearful little boys and girls dragged by their parents to apologize to the cashiers. It happens all the time so we get more embarrassed than mad.

All kinds of people come to this store. The guy who had my job before me said that once someone pulled up to the store in a chauffeur-driven limousine and came out to buy day-old cake. Well, I guess everybody likes bargains.

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